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Source: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1938), pp. 345-349

Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the School of Oriental and African Studies

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/608342>

Accessed: 17/08/2010 06:09

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Khargūshī's Manual of Sūfism

By A. J. ARBERRY

THROUGH the courtesy of the authorities of the Preussische Staatsbibliothek I have had the opportunity of reading in the India Office Library the apparently unique copy of Abū Sa'd ¹ 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Wā'iz al-Khargūshī's manual of Sūfism entitled *Tahdhīb al-asrār*. Khargūshī, who is otherwise known for his voluminous biography of the Prophet ² and a treatise on the interpretation of dreams, ³ died at Nishāpūr in 406/1015 or 407/1016. ⁴ He is therefore an earlier authority than Sulamī (d. 412/1021), Abū Nu'aim al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1039), and Qushairī (d. 465/1072), but is junior to Sarraj (d. 378/988), Kalābādhi (d. 385/995), and Abū Ṭalīb al-Makkī (d. 386/996). These comparisons are important, for they show Khargūshī as being a sufficiently early writer in the *genre* of systematic Sūfism. His name is not included in Nicholson's list of eight authorities for the history of early Sūfism, ⁵ and he does not appear to have received the attention which he deserves; though it is true that he has been utilized by Massignon in his study of Ḥallāj. ⁶ The purpose of the present note is to supplement the somewhat exiguous account of the work given by Ahlwardt, and also to estimate the true value of Khargūshī's manual as a primary source.

As Ahlwardt has observed, the *Tahdhīb al-asrār* in its present form is not the product of Khargūshī's own pen, but of that of a pupil. ⁷ In point of fact, the book comes at two removes from Khargūshī, as is indicated by the *isnād* given at the beginning of the first chapter, ⁸ and elsewhere in the work :

¹ According to the manuscript (Ahlwardt 2819) and other authorities, this is the correct form : there is, however, support for a variant, Abū Sa'id (cf. Brockelmann, *Suppl.*, p. 361). I write Khargūshī with Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 175, for Khargūsh is said (Sam'ānī, *K. al-Ansāb*, fol. 195b), to be the name of a street in Nishāpūr. The arabicized form is, of course, Kharkūshī.

² *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*, in eight volumes, see Brockelmann, *ibid.* A Persian version of this work is extant, see Storey, *loc. cit.*

³ *K. al-Bishāra wa'l-nidhāra*, see Brockelmann, *ibid.*

⁴ Brockelmann, *ibid.*, with the authorities there quoted.

⁵ Nicholson, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, *Introd.*, pp. i-ii.

⁶ *Passion*, *Bibliographie*, p. 13.

⁷ *Verzeichn. d. arab. Handschriften*, iii, p. 6.

⁸ Fol. 4a.

اخبرنا ابو عبد الله محمد بن احمد بن موسى الشيرازي بمكة
قال اخبرنا الامام الزاهد ابو سعد قال الخ

Similarly the *Kitāb al-Luma'* is transmitted by a pupil of Sarrāj. Concerning this Abū 'Abdillāh al-Shīrāzī there is an interesting notice in *Ta'rikh Baghdād* (i, pp. 359–360). According to *Khaṭīb*, who states that he himself wrote *ḥadīth* under Shīrāzī for a while in the year 410/1019, Shīrāzī made a considerable name for himself at Baghdād as a preacher and an ascetic. People were deceived by his show of piety, and flocked to his meetings in thousands. He restored a ruined mosque in the Shūnīzī quarter, and converted it into a monastery, amassing a considerable fortune at the expense of his admirers. Abandoning now his patched cloak and dressing himself in costly robes, he assembled a private army for the purpose of making *ghazw*, and is even reported to have marched against the governor of Adharbaijān. In the neighbourhood of Adharbaijān he died, in the year 439/1047. *Khaṭīb* laconically remarks that as an authority on *ḥadīth* he was considered to be weak (*da'if*).

Such a man, if we believe *Khaṭīb*, was the *rāwī* to whom ultimately we owe *Khargūshī's Tahdhīb al-asrār*. His reputation does not inspire confidence. Neither does a close analysis of the work itself give a very reassuring impression. It is fairly astonishing to find, on foll. 10b–11a, a definition of the Ṣūfī ascribed to al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, none other than the author of the *Ghunya* and other well-known works, who died in 561/1166, a century and a half after *Khargūshī's* decease ! It is true that a marginal note on fol. 11a, probably in the hand of the scribe (848/1444), states that this passage is an accretion (*ziyāda*) not found in the archetype (*nuskha*) of Abū Sa'd, and a similar remark occurs in the actual body of the text on fol. 10a, with reference to a saying of Ibn *Khafif* (d. 371/982) : but both these passages (and there may possibly be others) prove inflation of the text at a relatively late date. It seems hardly likely that the scribe had the actual autograph of *Khargūshī* before him, and he is probably merely making a perfectly natural deduction which does credit to his intelligence.

Coming to the actual structure of the book, it leaps to the eye at once that it has been closely modelled on the *Kitāb al-Luma'*. This much is evident when the list of chapters, given in full by Ahlwardt, is set side by side with the index of Sarrāj's book. Both begin (as is

only natural) with definitions of Ṣūfism. A chapter on the *Malāmatī*s, of great interest because Sulamī's *Uṣūl al-Malāmatīya* is the only other contemporary authority, breaks the continuity: but then in both works follows a section on gnosis (*ma'rifa*). Next come chapters on the *aḥwāl* and *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl* (mixed) in *Khargūshī*, on the *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl* in Sarrāj. But it is really unnecessary to expatiate further: the structure of the *Tahdhīb al-asrār* follows so closely that of the *Kitāb al-Luma'*, that there can be no reasonable doubt that *Khargūshī* (or his editor) took Sarrāj, without the slightest acknowledgment, as a model.

Nor is this all. *Khargūshī* (or his editor) borrows wholesale: not only in those chapters where sayings of early Ṣūfīs form the main contents, but even in his chapters of definitions of Ṣūfī terms, as the following examples illustrate:

(١) ومنها المقام وهو الذى يقوم بالعبد فى الاوقات من انواع
المعاملات وصدق المجاهدات فتى اقيم العبد فى شىء منها
على التمام فهو مقامه حتى ينتقل منه الى مقام آخر (تهذيب
ص ٢٣٠)

والمقام هو الذى يقوم بالعبد فى الاوقات مثل مقام
الصابرين والمتوكلين وهو مقام العبد بظاهره وباطنه فى
هذه المعاملات والمجاهدات والارادات فتى اقام (اقيم^B)
العبد فى شىء منه على التمام فهو مقامه حتى ينتقل منها الى
مقام آخر (اللمع ص ٣٣٥)

(٢) ومنها المكان وهو لاهل الكمال والتمكين والنهاية فاذا كمل
العبد فى معانيه فقد تمكّن فى المكان (تهذيب ص ٢٣٠)

والمكان هو لاهل الكمال والتمكين والنهاية فاذا كمل العبد
 في معانيه تمكّن له المكان الخ (اللمع ص ٣٣٥)
 (٣) ومنها الطوالع وهي انوار التوحيد تطلع على قلوب اهل المعرفة
 شعاعها فيطمس سلطان نورها ساير الانوار كما ان سلطان
 الشمس يطمس انوار الكواكب (تهذيب ص ٢٣٠ م)
 والطوالع انوار التوحيد تطلع على قلوب اهل المعرفة بتشعشعها
 فيطمئين ما في القلوب من الانوار بسلطان نورها كالشمس
 الطالعة اذا طلعت يخفى على الناظر من سطوة نورها انوار
 الكواكب وهي في اماكنها (اللمع ص ٣٤٥)

This list needs not to be expanded further : page after page bears witness to the plagiarism.

So much for destructive criticism. On the positive side, it can be said that the *Tahdhīb al-asrār* is in many chapters fuller than the *Luma'*, and contains hundreds of sayings, as well as not a few verses and openings of letters, not preserved by Sarraj, and quite probably not extant elsewhere. Though it seems certain that in almost every instance *Khargūshī* is only quoting at second-hand, nevertheless, since his other authorities are no longer in existence, he acquires the importance attaching to an original writer. His chapter on the *Malāmātīs* has already been mentioned : there are chapters of original discussion on the subject of the *karāmāt* of saints and *mu'jizāt* of prophets, (foll. 185b-199a). Moreover, in a few passages the author writes of his own personal experiences, notably in the chapter on heavenly voices (*hawātif*), where (on fol. 185a) we read :

Abū Sa'd al-Wā'iẓ (God be pleased with him), the author of the book, says : " I was once making the circuit [of the Kaaba], and was invoking God with a prayer used by one of the Prophets in the Qur'ān, when I heard a voice from heaven saying, ' Say, O Lord, forgive and be merciful, for Thou art the best of them

that show mercy.' Then I knew that in certain petitions the degree of the Prophets is different from that of ordinary men."

Abū Sa'd also said (God have mercy on him): "I was also performing the lesser pilgrimage, when I heard a voice from heaven saying: 'O son of my mother, O son of my mother!' This was at the time of dawn. My heart was troubled, and I stood stock still. A neighbour in front of me stopped and said, 'What ails thee?' I replied, 'I heard such and such.' He said, 'Likely enough the voice means that a brother [of thine] has died.' I was amazed, and my thoughts were in confusion. When I returned to my room, I wanted to write at once, but for luck forbore so to do. This happened in Shā'bān. When the pilgrims arrived [for the greater pilgrimage], I was given news of my brother's death: I was told that he had died in Shā'bān, at the very hour when I heard the heavenly voice saying 'O son of my mother, O son of my mother!'"

From this analysis of the book, it will be evident that the *Tahdhīb al-asrār* is not to be assigned to the same rank as a primary source for the history of Ṣūfism as that occupied by the works of Sarrāj, Makkī, Kalābādhī, and Qushairī, not to mention (of unpublished or partially-published authorities) Sulamī and Abū Nu'aim al-Iṣfahānī. Nevertheless, though the many plagiarisms committed by the author, and the unreliable nature of the transmission of his book, render it inadvisable that the *Tahdhīb al-asrār* should be published, at all events in its present form on the sole authority of the Berlin manuscript,¹ yet it is a source by no means to be disregarded; and no complete history of Ṣūfism will ever be written that does not take into account the manual of Khargūshī.

¹ It may be added that the Berlin manuscript gives an excellent impression: it is clearly written, fully and accurately vocalized, and though uncollated, nevertheless appears to be extremely reliable. It should be remarked that the author announces, in his preface (fol. 4a), his intention to confine himself to the "sober" side of Ṣūfism, and to pass over all sayings made in shath or in the state of *sukr*.